THINGS WORTH WHILE

BY

HORACE G. WILLIAMSON.

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I am yours for the smiles that are finding a vent
From a heart overflowing with Life's sweet content

Horace G. Williamson

Things Worth While

A VOLUME OF VERSE

ILLUSTRATED

By

HORACE G. WILLIAMSON

Author of "Old Hollyhocks and Other Poems and Recitations"

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DEDICATION.

This book I dedicate to my friends, my many friends, who have given me the inspirations and help in digging up some of the things worth while.

PREFACE.

It is good to wish for much, expect everything, and be thankful for what you really get.

The greatest lesson we learn in this life is to appreciate our own conditions, and then to help others to see the best of theirs.

After all we are only human beings, dependent upon each other entirely for the sustenance of this short existence, and a kind act contributed occasionally to the fund of happiness will in time reflect back to us from the smiles of our friends.

No matter how humble we may discover our lot to be when we step from the cradle into the path of responsibility, there is still a fair world about us, where a fountain of content flows always, the waters of which are free if you care to drink.

You may accumulate all the gold in the world, you may attain all the honors possible, you may appear to your fellow-men a very king, to be envied for your great distinction,

your masterful mind, your physical strength, or your daring courage; but if down in the silent chamber of your own conscious soul you fail to hear the songs of the birds in the branches above you, are blind to the beauties of the flowers around you, are dumb to the presence of an Almighty God whose benediction is in the kiss of the very breeze that fans you, then you have lost life's reality, you have missed the things worth while.

There is so much to claim as a birthright, there is so much to leave as an inheritance, and though our accomplishment be ever so small, let us express ourselves in some way to show our appreciation.

I should like to think deeper than I can, I should like to write clearer than I do, I should like to be better in everything that I attempt, but I have done my best, I have tried to be understood in these simple verses, which are the cold printed plan of my own feelings and imagination, the best expression I can give to my own thoughts; you are free to have yours regarding them.

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Things Worth While

To LOOK and see the beautiful
  This world holds to the view;
To listen and to hear the songs
  Which Nature sings for you.

To taste the sweet, of all you eat;
  To smell each fragrant flower,
To know, to feel that God is real;
  To live within the hour.

To love one who deserves your love;
  To face all with a smile;
To reach a goal by trying hard;
  These are the things worth while.

LIFE'S REALITY.

ALL there is that is good is for us to enjoy
If we will but open our eyes;
From the sweet-scented, flower-decked green of the earth
To the cloud-scattered blue of the skies.

When good health is a friend you can trust to be true,
Then no matter what fortune might say;
All the pleasures worth while are of access to you,
Even gold can not steal them away.

Yes it pays just to live and to love and to work
And to sing and to dream and to dare;
Yes it pays to look up at the stars and to know
There's another world waiting somewhere.

It is good to admire the rich gains of our friends,
Nor to envy them even in shares;

It is good to compete with the failures we meet
Until our own earned wealth equals theirs.

There is value to nothing, unless we have toiled
By an action or thought to make ours;
It 's to anticipate and to long and to wait
For a view of our dream's castle towers.

The poor man with a care and it 's not the rich heir
Who enjoys his possessions the most
For the pleasures and play in his one holiday
Are far more than a king could well boast.

To be able to see the wild birds in their glee,
To be able to hear their sweet song,
To inhale the pure breeze off the old orchard trees,
Is worth living for all this life long.

For the hard lots that fall to the most of us all
Are only the soul-trying test;
We will find fate a friend if we stay to the end
And it all will work out for the best.

So just laugh when you 're glad and just smile
when you 're sad.
Do what 's right and make well of your
years,
And you 'll reap with the rest all the pleas-
ures that 's best,
There will be no more time for the tears.

There ' a heaven for all when the last
trumpets call;
There 's a heaven where sad sorrows cease;
Where the beggar and king both drink from
one spring
On the side of the foot-path to peace.

So do n't worry, do n't fret, it is well to
forget
All the trouble and pain of the past;
Just think of those who are much worse off
than you,
Then unfurl Hope's new sail from your
mast.

Yes, unfurl the broad sail to the blast of the
gale,
Though it blow you to East or to West;
Be content with your lot whether lofty or not,
Remember; 'God knows what is best.'

Let your conscience be pure, with a will to
endure
When the storms of adversity rage;
Let your strength and your stress be to make
a success
Of what you write down on life's page.

It 's a privilege of earth, we inherit at birth,
To lay claim to the best that we can;
And much pity on him whose dull vision 's
so dim
That he 's blind to the blessings of man.

All there is that is good is for us to enjoy,
If we will but open our eyes;
From the sweet-scented, flower-decked green
of the earth
To the cloud-scattered blue of the skies.

JEST SATISFIED.

I AIN'T no man ter try an' be
Any more than what yer see;
I always had my own idee
  As ter the way of livin';
The world do n't owe me nothin' yet;
Ner I 've got nothin' ter regret;
An' I ain't one ter stew an' fret
  'Bout what the Lord 's a givin'.

'Cause if ter-morrow 's goin' ter be
A day of rain, why rain suits me;
Might jest as well at fust agree
  With minds of higher reason
Though if the birds air goin' ter sing
An' the sun shine down on everything
As purty an' as fresh as spring;
  I 'm equal ter the season.

I do n't go much on wealth ner fame;
I git along about the same
A takin' care of my good name
  Than if I owned the nation:

I 'll leave them fer another man
Ter take his share, with more brains than
I might boast of, an' who best can
Fill in the situation.

I 'm livin' fer the good I git
Out of this life, with jest a bit
Of the bright sunny side of it
To act as sort o' flavor,
An' when my time is nearly done,
With jest a little sand ter run,
I do n't think that yer 'll find me one
With debts of bad behav'r.

ALONG IN MAY.

ALONG about the first of May,
On Saturday afternoon, we 'll say,
When all the office work is through
And there is nothing else to do
But go a-fishing up some creek
A little ways, just so to speak:
Where timber-land allows your pick
Of a real good strong sapling stick
For a pole; take a ball of twine
To serve you as a fishing line
When it 's bedecked with hook and
weight
And also a fat squirming bait
That 's liable to tempt the eye
Of any fish that 's passing by:

There 's nothing that so quickly serves
To put a callous on the nerves
Than this, if you are thus inclined,
When in your idle hours to find
A quiet spot and lazily
Forget that there happens to be

A world of worry, noise and care
Beckoning o'er the hill somewhere;
Of imitations and false stress
Marking an age of great progress:
Just harmlessly a-lolling there,
With all that feeling of "do n't care,"
Within the shade along some stream

Where fancy now can court her dream
Uninterrupted by the sound
Of noisiness anywhere around:

It makes a fellow feel as though
The time was his, and he could throw
Away some thoughts which schooled him in
Those lessons of all that 's been;

And now that he is going to share
The freedom of the fragrant air
Which comes to him as down he lies
Upon his back, with dreamful eyes,
And looks up through the fresh young green
Of trees, where bright blue skies between
Lift high his inspired soul to see
A visionary eternity.

How God's great orchestra of birds
Sing sweet to him, with blended words
In language strange, that does express
The fullness of such happiness;
While now uncalled will surely come
To him, that low and doleful hum
Of honey bees when in wild quest
For pleasures, to their interest,
Leaving behind them on the air
A trail of music everywhere:

How the brook will laugh for him
And playfully bubble o'er its brim;
And the riffles' soft, sweet refrain
Will soothingly remind his brain
Of mother's song, sung soft and low
In those old days of long ago,
When his heart beat but frankly knew
No contrast for the pure and true:

There 's no place where a fellow can
Lay aside the formal man,
And give forth free an earnest vent
To all his stored-up sentiment,
Better than with a fishing pole
To be a-loafing 'round some hole
Along the creek, hid from the eyes
Of this old world, where he can size
Up all his past, and then express
The limits of his thankfulness.

A TOAST.

HERE 'S to every human soul
Upon this earth, from pole to pole;
To every race on land or sea,
To young and old of each degree:
Here 's to all that live, and may
Some happiness be theirs to-day.

THE NEW TRAIL.

The following poem was written as a tribute to Captain Jack Crawford, the Poet Scout, whom I liken to a bottle of carbonated sunshine, always on tap, and ready to burst forth and bubble over the hearts of all who hear him, with the sparkling soul-essence. (His reply to the author is also printed here.)

WELL, Captain Jack, I 've heard you talk and
tell in your own way
Of how the things go on out West, and I just
want to say
Without a boast of flattery, that I think you 're
about
The best that I have ever heard, beyond a
single doubt:
I 've had a taste of West myself, and know a
little how
It ought to be out there, although Ohio claims
me now:
But there is nothing I know of that I would
rather do,
Than turn my horse into the trail that follows
after you.

There 's no road in the "Rocky Pass" I think could ever be
Too rough to risk, if you were there to bear me company;
There 's not a range of "Buffalo Grass" or "stretch of alkali"
That ever would be hard to ride if you were just close by:
With grub-bag and a saddle tied on an old "XV" brand,
A pair of "chaps," a buckskin coat, a "pop-gun" close at hand,
I think that I could loose the rein and for a year or two
Out there in God's free country, shift 'round awhile with you:
To have you at the big "round-up;" why I can almost see
In my imagination how the whole thing ought to be.
We 're down there by the Rio Grande upon a cold clear night,
The stars are twinkling far above, the moon is shining bright,
The camp-fire is a blazing and the boys are sitting 'round
A-leaning on their saddles that they 've placed there on the ground.

The coffee-pot is boiling while each man has fallen to
His "hunk" of meat or "flap jack" or perhaps he is most through
And they are all a-listening to you telling them a tale
In your own cheerful way about a new unridden trail
That leads from Earth to Heaven by the way of yonder blue,
And every man can ride it if he makes his mind up to.
"Just drop the old bad habits, boys, leave off the drink, the swear,
Stick firmly to the saddle, and you 're bound to get up there.
And boys, ah! what a land it is, as you have never seen,
Where scout and cowboy are as good as royal king or queen,
Where every chap will get his dues for all the good he 's done,
And life will be eternity of peace to everyone."
You 've told them of their Heaven, Jack, and if you could lean near
To every face around that fire perhaps you 'd find a tear.

You 've touched them on the tender spot beneath the shirt of blue
Where every heart beats an applause for such a friend as you.
The silence followed by your speech continues quite a spell
Unbroken, save the crackling flames and far-off coyotes' yell;

Yes, Captain Jack, I 've heard you talk and tell in your own way
Of how the things go on out West, but closing this I say:
There 's stories that you 've never told of scouting you have done
For souls turned off "The trail of God,"—I know there 's more than one.
But when the time comes for your ride into that camp above,
There 'll be a lot to greet you there with friendship and with love,
And as your old time "pals" you meet, they 'll slap you on the back
And say, "Thank God, he 's come at last, welcome our Captain Jack."

THE REPLY.

Friend Horace:

As your other name is Greeley,
I will tell you frankly, freely,
How your broncho verses snuggled in my breast
For I 've got a sort of notion
That they stirred up more commotion
Than the red-skins ever stirred out in the West.

But a very different feeling
Now comes softly o'er me stealing
Till the briny starts a leakin' from my eyes,
While my soul is irrigated
And with yours amalgamated;
You great big chump he-angel in disguise.

Glory, but it 's satisfaction
That my simple double action
Broncho medley of song and story tells,
For the gem your soul has spoken
Is to me a God-sent token
Of the genius and the pow'r that in you dwells.

Let 'er out, though wild and woolly
Even slinging slang is bully
If ye only hit the bull's eye, when you shoot.
Do n't wet-blanket your emotion
Hunting for some dainty notion
Take a draught from Nature's bowl and let 'er toot.

If there 's "critic cusses" standin'
While yer shootin'—at the landin'
Never swerve a little bit if you are fired
With a bit of Nature's powder;
Only yell and shout the louder;
"Go way back," you "critic cusses" make me tired.

Hallelujah for the feller
Who can up and yell and beller
Like a lion and not like a little calf.
It 's the lazy lout that 's dudish
And the simple fool that 's prudish
If you 're honest with yourself, you 'll cry and laugh.

And while thus I doggerel you
With Pegasus I corral you
I would also lay my tribute at your feet,
For the heart your verse has brought me
Is as Mother Nature taught me
Wild and tender as a boy's and just as sweet.

Keep it thus forever. Never
From your god of Nature sever,
Use the language that expresses what you feel.
List; a newsboy, just turned seven,
Says: "Me mudder 's snook in Heben."
There 's a classic bit of slang, because it 's real.
—*Captain Jack Crawford.*

* * *

MAKE GOOD.

WE all have a chance in this life to try
And make good.
We only live once and then we must die,
So make good.
Find out your own particular line
For you have yours and I have mine,
Study up every point, and then shine.
Make good.

Do n't faint if the critics begin to grunt,
But make good.
That 's only a part of their own little stunt
To make good.
You stand up straight, throw out your chest.
Why, you 're as good as any of the rest.
Just take your time, you do your best.
Make good.

YOU NEVER KNOW WHO YOU RIDE WITH.

I BOARDED a car the other day;
You never know who you ride with:
A sweet little girl sat 'cross the way;
You never know who you ride with.
Well, I looked over for quite a while,
She caught my eye and began to smile,
Then people came in and filled the aisle;
You never know who you ride with.

I stood up and took hold on a strap;
You never know who you ride with:
Placed my bundle in the young lady's lap,
You never know who you ride with.
O, we had such a nice little chat;
We talked of this and we talked of that;
Her neighbor got off, so down I sat;
You never know who you ride with.

Suddenly, I looked to my right,
You never know who you ride with:
What I saw there was a terrible sight,
You never know who you ride with:

A face contorted in anger's strife,
Two eyes that cut me like a knife,
I recognized them as my wife's,
You never know who you ride with.

IT 'S MY WISH.

If wishes can make a thing come true,
And sometimes I really believe they do;
I wish that at some time, some place
Upon this world's old wrinkled face
Each living friend I ever knew,
(And I confess there 're quite a few,)
Could drift into some place once more
Like scattered ships to a haven shore
And be as happy as once we 've been
With laughter's rousing, ringing din
Echoing to the clear blue sky
As we lift up our voices high
And give three cheers to memory
Of good old times that used to be.

RELICS FROM BABYLAND.

THERE is a land, I won't say where,
But grown-up people can't go there;
For only little babies dwell
In this fair place of which I tell,
And only babies understand
The funny ways of babyland,
All which to you and me are not
Of anything more than a lot
Of those deep mysteries which remain
For one more learned to explain.

Their king, he wears no gilded crown,
Nor dresses in a gaudy gown,
And for a throne, naught suits him more
Than just a seat upon the floor,
Where, with a rattle or a ring
Or any simple little thing
That lies about among his toys
To rule and make the loudest noise
Which into meanings surely tell
That all the kingdom goeth well;

For no land like this bright one could
Be more of anything but good
Where each and every member vents
The freedom of his innocence.

And when one of them grows to be
Beyond the bounds of infancy,
And lays aside his cap and dress
And all his simple babyishness,
He has to leave and go away
To a far distant land to stay
An exile there, in time to find
A different thing to please his mind,
And there must learn to feel content
With what is dealt as the event.

Although in time his heart may yearn
For just a short while to return
And hold once more some little hand
Of his old friends in Babyland;
Just as you and I to-day
Stand quietly and look away
Back o'er the years that all are gone;
We too in fancy see the dawn
As it shone out across the sand
For us in our own Babyland.

LONGING.

If I could have all I long for,
My wish could realize,
I know I would not ask for more
Than to look in your eyes.

If somewhere, some place, we could meet,
And you, you would just smile,
My happiness would be complete
For such a short, sweet while.

If I could find you where you are,
Could once more see your face,
I 'd travel, yes, I 'd travel far
Nor heed the time or space.

If I could once more look into
The depths of your dark eyes,
Could once more feel the thrill anew
'T would be my Paradise.

If bound in irons they 'd fast me where
I might feast sight on you,
I would be e'en contented there
With such a hope in view.

If just one hour I could live o'er
  Where dearest memories throng,
I know I would not ask for more,
  I 'd have all that I long.

A BOASTFUL MISS

SHE was a vain and boastful miss
As ever partook of earthly bliss:
Very pretty, but knew it well,
And of her charms she liked to tell;
Just bragged and boasted all the time,
She said her lips were real sublime
And no one's mouth had ever grown
Quite to the equal of her own.
She even mentioned this to me,
Tried to excite my jealousy.
But I told her then and there
That any time or anywhere
When she would be so kind to say,
I 'd put my lips to her lips any day.

WHEN MY DREAM COMES TRUE.

WHEN my dream comes true and I really get to be
An actor on the stage that the people pay to see;
When the curtain will go up and the orchestra will play,
And I 'll make my first entrance in a very graceful way,
And strut about the stage in a gay bedecked attire
For the gentlemen—to look upon and the ladies to admire,
And I say a lot of things in a real sad way you know,
While the fellows all play soft on their instruments below,
And I hear a young girl sob 'way out in the parquet,
And over in a box I hear another say:
"O mamma, is n't he great? he 's an actor sure enough."
(This gives me lots of nerve to carry out my bluff,)

And I strike an attitude like an ancient God
of Greece,
And there I stand and pose till their applaud-
ings cease.
Then I make a quick exit right after they are
through
To where my valet awaits, when my dream
comes true.

When my dream comes true and I actually
will play
The sentimental parts that take the audience
away,
And they 're brought back with a tear in
either eye,
And they sit there in their seats and in turn
they laugh and cry,
There will be a real snowstorm and an air-
ship and a lake,
We will have a six course dinner and the food
will not be fake;
The thunder will be the loudest brand of
thunder ever made,
And the rain storm in the third act will put
real ones in the shade,
And I will fight a duel; (of course it will not
hurt
The other fellow much as I poke him in the
shirt,)

But I 'll make a grand rush for him and at
him I will spring,
And the orchestra will boom, boom, and the
clashing steel will ring,
And then with a sudden lurch his foil I will
throw
Clear across the stage, (as we arranged before
the show,)
And with my foot upon his neck I 'll pose as
gladiators do;
O, I certainly will be *great* when my dream
comes true.

When my dream comes true and I get a cur-
tain call,
And I have to come out and bow right before
them all,
And act as awkward like and bored all the
while,
And my face slips into a silly grinning
smile,
And the curtain goes down, but right up once
more,
And I have to come back and do as I 'd done
before,
But they keep on applauding till I 'm forced
to make a speech
And I thank them one and all and throw a
kiss to each.

I tell them how in childhood it had been my keen desire
To some day be an actor that would set the world afire;
I thank them for their attention and their attendance to the play,
And bow and bow and grin and grin and back myself away
While the bouquets keep a falling like snow flakes 'round my feet,
And I 'll grasp them in my arms and beat a quick retreat
And I 'll press them to my lips with their trailing ribbons of blue,
Then I 'll interview the reporters, when my dream comes true.

When my dream comes true, when my dream comes true,
I will send a box pass to every one of you;
And I will build a castle, I do not know just where,
But every one of you will be very welcome there
To come and bring your baggage and stay as long as you please,
And live with me in comfort with a silent sort of ease.

Everything that you wish for will be right at your hand,
From a box of chocolate bonbons to a military band,
And there I 'll build a little stage upon which I can play
To amuse you if it 's raining and while the time away,
And O, we 'll be so happy in this castle built of gold
That we 'll just live on forever, and we never will grow old,
But like a lot of children we will spend the pleasant hours
Roaming through the palace gardens of sweetly scented flowers,
And we 'll linger where the fountains sing, where summer skies are blue,
Where we 'll eat, drink and be merry, when my dream comes true.

THE RAIN BARREL.

At the cabin's end a barrel stands
With weathered staves and rusted bands;
Upon a leaning tilt, an inch or so,
To course the stream of its overflow;

As if bowed reconciled with fate,
And willing to accumulate
Within its bounds the drops which fall
By heaven's justice, over all.

Up to the side there 's a piece of tin
Held fast and bent, so the rain runs in

When it leaves the clumsy old eaves-trough
In its eagerness to plunge right off
And fall with such a splash and smack
Like music of a cataract,
Which chants itself a doleful strain
Of thankfulness for such a rain.

Then as a break in the cloud appears,
The sun looks out from behind her tears;
Quivering upon the brim there lies
An echoed picture of summer skies;
And days which come when fields are dry,
When streams run slow in creeks close by,
The tongue may find a cooling sup
From out this rustic loving-cup.

HOME.

It is just plain home that I 've known for every day
From my infancy till now; but for it I must say
That no other spot on earth can lure me long away
From this 'just plain home' where I find myself to-day.

HOW IT FEELS TO BE ALIVE.

LIFE 'S the queerest thing after all
For those who share in it, to call
Much more than that the fickle sense
Is getting pleased at their expense;
Just one big jolly of the taste
With flavored food, that makes you waste
Your time in eating it, for when
It 's gone you want some more again;
While old dry thirst bluffs you to think
It 's your treat coming to the drink;
Sleep knocks you down and says, "lie there,"
You know he 's lied, but you do n't dare
To contradict him, or he 'll take
You down for keeping him awake,
And so it usually is best
To submit to such an arrest:

Gets a sweet kiss upon the pride
That makes him feel self-satisfied
Only for a minute, and then
Discontent slaps him once again
And spoils it all by letting care
Have a crack at his life somewhere,

And where it hurts and leaves a rent
For a spell of discouragement,
To settle in which may turn to
A melancholy case of blue
That now is liable to stick
Until the fellow gets real sick:

He 'll suffer along in this way
For some time, when perhaps there may
Occur to him a pleasant thought
Which, fanned by hope, will like as not
Put him upon his feet once more,
Where a good laugh will soon restore
His feelings to a normal state,
And content will scratch his sore fate
Until Soul's lonely sentinel
Is heard to say, that all is well:

Then something in him tempts his bad,
And 'fore he knows it he has had
His foot in it by letting go
To his will-string, which soon will throw
Things out of gear, and when thus freed
Will let him fall into the greed
That makes a man lose all his sense
And fools him at his own expense.
The devil takes him, you might say,
Down home to spend a holiday,
And (please excuse this slang in rhyme)
Shows him what is "A hot old time:"

Perhaps he 'll wallow in this mire
For quite a while, untii desire
Is surfeited and singed his wings,
Then he 'll look different on things:
Wisdom will clear his eyes until
Honor takes hold, and conscience will
Slap him upon the back and say,
"See here, my boy, you 've gone astray;"
Ambition then gets strengthened by
A good strong drink of distilled try;
With failure slipping now and then
Persistence makes him try again,
Until constancy has at length
Revived him to his old time strength,
And in a short while he 's begun
To feel as good as any one,
Even will blow and bray and say:
"Well, things are coming all my way."
But now look out if he is struck
By a far different kind of luck,
And on some day is roughly hit
With something, and what causes it
He does not know, gets all bedazed
From the effects, loses his ways,
And bashfully makes a pretense
To say things which contain no sense.

You can just bet he 's had a shove
From Cupid's nimble fist of love

That 's pushed him right into the pool
Where every man becomes a fool,
And gets his mind all out of place
Dreaming over a pretty face:
Here comes the time for foolishness
To trip him up, and make a mess
Of the whole thing with that old trick
Of branding him a benedict,
While this addition of a wife
Will give more romance to his life,
For then is when he gets in bad,
And pays for all the joy he 's had,
While on the fence there sits old fun
Laughing at him for what he 's done,
As he wriggles in that tight noose—
"Obedience," trying to loose
Himself and once more get a taste
Of a single life that 's going to waste:

Though all in time he gets to be
Quite pacified by harmony,
As soundness shows to him his wealth
Of wholeness in his share of health;
He takes to pleasure like a child,
Where peace and freedom have beguiled
Him while in rapture, to confess
The fullness of his completeness;
He has a lot of dignity
In pride for his large family,

Whose success has now gratified
His faith to feel well satisfied;
Grows old in this bright cheerfulness
Of being humored to excess,
And one day gets to thinking it
All over, and is strangely hit
By the absurdness of it all,
That heretofore he 's had to call
The part he played in this life, for
It really has been nothing more
Than sensation trying to serve
A "skin-game" on his easy nerve;

The thing gets funnier as he
Thinks what an easy mark to be
Conned by all of these qualities;
Comes to the conclusion that he 's
Been doped for fair by gambler Fate;
Was sadly hazed at any rate;
He gets to laughing at the sin
Of what a great big chump he 's been,
That his whole mental faculty
Did not even have wits to see
How the sense would first soothe, then thresh
The feeling masked behind the flesh,
And all the largeness of the joke
Gives his funny bone a good poke,
Until he really can not quit
His laughing at the fun of it,

Giggle or snicker, grin or smile,
Keeps nudging his face all the while,
Laugh out real loud, and then stop short;
Give a low chuckle, next a snort,
And then goes at it with a note
That sounds like it would split his throat;
Just roars and holds his sides and falls
Upon the floor, where now he lolls
High in the mirth that takes his breath,
And simply tickles him to death.

TAKEN BACK.

"A PENNY for your thoughts," said he,
When she became so quiet.
But she replied, "Not worth the price
You offer me to buy it."
"Then tell it to me anyhow,"
Said he, "I beg you to."
"Well, if you will have me confess,
My thoughts were all of you."

CHECKERS.

In a big department store
Where they sell all things galore,
Was a checkroom just for little babies small,
So when mothers came to shop,
At this checkroom they would stop,
And leave their young ones in a padded stall.

One bright day a Mrs. Brown
Brought her baby into town,
And wishing much to match a special lace
Checked her babe on coupon three,
Then went off at once to see
Where the bargain counter was about the place.

Well, no sooner had Mrs. Brown
Set her precious darling down,
Than a lady by the name of Mrs. Green
'Cross the checking counter slid
Her fat squalling little kid,
And took a check which number was fourteen.

The new check girl, all complexed,
Had so muddled up the checks
That on baby Brown she tied the tag fourteen,
And in her hurried, flurried haste
She unconsciously had placed
The number three on little baby Green.

When they went to close the store
There were two kids uncalled for.
It was getting dark and very, very late,
When a voice said, "Give to me
That baby number three,"
While another, "Give me fourteen, I can't wait."

Neither mother had a doubt,
As she hurriedly went out,
But what she held her own sweet precious joy.
Until reaching home that night
Each beheld a startling sight,
For what was once a girl was now a boy.

Now each started out to find
That check girl, and you mind
They did not stop until they'd reached her place,
And though neither of them knew
That the other had come too,
They met there with the babies, face to face.

The check girl lived in a flat,
(Though blame her not for that),
It was quite hard to wake her from a snore.
But at last her blinking eyes
Were wide opened by surprise,
When she saw two ladies standing at the door.

Now first one would have her say,
Then the other would blaze away,
Until you 'd thought they both had lost their minds.
But when shy of breath and talk
They did not slow down or balk,
But with their hands and heads made knowing signs.

The poor check girl took it all
As they sassed her in the hall,
Nor even shed a tear or cracked a smile
When suddenly the ladies made
With the babes an even trade,
And started off in rather informal style.

The poor girl was of Irish birth,
And she could n't restrain her mirth,
So she shouted to them loudly from behind,
"Sure, I turned yer kids aroun',
And I made a Green one Brown,
Because ye see I am so color-blind."

"OUT T' UNCLE BEN'S."

Introductory to the following piece of child dialect, I shall try to assist the reader's imagination by stating that the two small boys mentioned therein have taken it upon themselves to entertain their big sister's gentleman friend, whom they have found, by accident, in the "bestest" chair in the parlor, with a description of their annual visit to their farmer Uncle's. The eldest is supposed to be doing the talking, assisted by an occasional nod of assent from the younger, while in the meantime sister is very busily engaged, a few feet above, in testing the warmth of sterling silver curling-tongs and losing invisible hairpins in the intricate depths of large, black masses of "natural curls."

"Out t' Uncle Ben's."

Me an' brother Willie 's goin' out t' Uncle
Ben's t' stay;
Ain't we, Willie? Mother said so, did n't
she, Willie, the other day?
Just as soon as our vacation comes around,
she said we could
Go an' stay all this next summer, if we prom-
ised we 'd be good
An' not be bother to Aunt Mary, ner make
her extra work to do,
But we ain't goin' to, are we, Willie? We 'll
help her when she wants us to.

Our Uncle Ben? Why, he 's a farmer, lives
'way out in the country where
You can holler as loud as you want, an' do
as you please out there;
Ain't no bad boys to throw stones, ner call yo'
names, ner throw yo' down.
Why, some of them boys what live out there
never been inside of town;
Ner ain't got no nice clothes, ner nothin' nice
as me an' Willie 's got;
An' some do n't even wear suspenders in sum-
mer, when it 's awful hot,
Ner no coats, ner shoes 'r stockin's, jest their
pants an' shirt, 'an when
They go swimmin' down in the river, they
do n't jest wear nothin' then.
Gee, them boys know how to fish, though, an'
make 'em bite jest right at first,
An' me an' Willie 's goin' with 'em some time,
maybe, if we durst.

Say, did y' ever hunt fer eggs 'way up high
in a big barn lof',
An' climb way up on a great big ladders, to
the roof an' then jump off
Inter the hay an' roll around an' dig down
through to where it ends?
We do it lots, do n't we, Willie? when we 're
out t' Uncle Ben's.

Sister, she do n't like the country; says she
thinks it awful dry;
Jes' because there aint no beaux out there to
love her 's the reason why,
Ner take her places an' buy her nice things
like the other fellows who
Come to see her an' give us pennies an' candy
sometimes do.
One time sister had a feller what give me an'
Willie a dime,
An' we bought lots of good things with it
for ourselves, one time;
Think his name was Mr. Merland, anyhow
he 's all right;
Aint he, Willie? Willie knows him, wish he
was a-comin' to-night.

Say, I wish it was vacation, do n't you, Wil-
lie? Spec' we 'd then
Start real early in the mornin' out to stay
with Uncle Ben,
An' not come home 'til 'way next winter, not
until our school 's begun.
Um, I bet if you was with us, you would say
we had more fun
Goin' 'round with Billy Smithson, he 's the
hired man, an' he tends
To all the horses an' cows an' pigs an' every-
thing at Uncle Ben's.

An' he takes us in the wagon nearly every
place he goes,
An' lets us drive sometimes too, do n't he,
Willie? Willie knows;
An' once he took us to the river an' let the
old horse wade into
The very middle of the river till the river
leaked right through
An' nearly got us wet, an' Willie he got scared
an' had to bawl
Jes' like a great big baby, did n't yo'? Gee,
I was n't scared at all.

Our Aunt Mary makes the nicest cookies fer
us when she bakes,
With great big raisins on the top, an' pies
an' little ginger-cakes,
An' then she lets us go pick berries 'long the
orchard fence, an' there
Are rattledsnakes an' big wild animals crawl-
in' 'round most everywhere
In the weeds an' great big buzzards what eat
up chickens, an' eagles too,
Flyin' 'round where we pick berries, Um, I
bet that that 'd scare you.

Gee, you ought to see the chickens what our
Uncle Ben has got,

And horses, cows and rooster chickens, Um,
he owns an awful lot;
Willie, he 's afraid of turkeys, I aint though,
'ceptin' one
What all swelled up when I poked him with
a stick, whew, I run!
Fer I was scared and I cried, too, and Uncle
Ben jest laughed and said
"Spec' that gobler made me skee-daddle,
'cause he knew I 'm city-bred."

I wish mother 'd let us take real guns with
us when we go.
Willie, he 's too little to shoot one, but I could
shoot it fer him, though,
An' we could kill some birds and eagles, an'
catch rabbits with 'em too.
Let 's go ask her; you ask, Willie; maybe
she 'll let us if yo' do.
Gee, I hear our sister comin', so I guess we 'd
better clear
Or she won't give us none of that candy you
got fer her if she catches us here.

AN OLD APPLE-TREE.

THE old apple-tree beneath whose broad shade
Since infancy's hours I 've rested and played.
In the cool of the morning or noon's torrid heat
I have found it to offer a pleasant retreat.

With its wide-spreading branches of summer hung green,
So close interwoven that scarcely between
The warm sun from above could find its way through
To scatter the moisture of grass-hidden dew.
At the will of the breeze, in my hammock hung low,

'Neath fruit-bedecked boughs I drift to and fro,
While fancy builds castles in future's domain,
And memory sips slowly of the sweet cup again,
Unconscious of time or of passing event,
My soul lulls itself into peaceful content,
And I ask of no more in God's great unknown,
Than the peace I enjoy with my friends or alone
In these cool clustered shadows that scatter the earth
Under the old tree near the home of my birth.
For no hours of life are dearer to me,
Than these dream-mellowed whiles 'neath the old apple-tree.

MOTHER.

No SWEETER words in English tongue,
Nor sounds of any other,
Can echo from the soul's best thoughts,
Than simply these, "My Mother."

THERE'S SO MUCH TO BE THANKFUL FOR.

THERE'S so much to be thankful for,
Complain and grumble as we may;
We never stop to realize
The wealth that is our own to-day.
Think of the blind who 'll never see
The beautiful in everything;
Think of the deaf who 'll never hear
The sweetest songs the wild birds sing;
Think of all those whose souls are bound
To bodies frail and weak and sore;
Think of all this suffering—
There 's so much to be thankful for.

Life's greatest gift is often lost
Through constant greed for fortune's goal;
Content is trampled at its cost;
Sweet peace is shattered in the soul.
Though lofty heights are never reached;
Though golden dreams fade by the score;
Though despair darkens all our hopes,
There 's so much to be thankful for.

So may the silent hour come
When we will stop and think it o'er,
Compare ourselves to those worse off
In what we should be thankful for;
Our God is just, His way 's the best;
He gives no less, He gives no more;
We do the least when we confess
There 's so much to be thankful for.

A ROSE whose bloom
With sweet perfume,
I longed some day to pluck;
A worm that bit
And withered it;
A tear for such poor luck.

The rose, a girl
Pure as a pearl;
The longing, Love's kind art:
The worm, a man;
Son of Satan;
The tear, a broken heart.

BILL HARDY'S BARN.

We discover our speaker seated upon the high end of an empty soap-box one hot summer's afternoon, leaning leisurely back against the railing which protects the veranda of a country cross-roads grocery store.

He has been whittling a stick of wood and keeping the dust of the road down with the essence of a plug of "Mountain Dew" as he patiently awaits his turn to do a little "tradin'" with the proprietor.

As we engaged him in conversation he grows deeply interested in telling us of a genius in the neighborhood known to all as Bill Hardy, and as we draw him out by patiently listening we receive the following description of Bill Hardy and Bill Hardy's Barn:

BILL HARDY'S BARN.

So y' do n't know Bill Hardy, eh?
Well, my friend, I want to say
A loafin' 'round Bill Hardy's barn
With all the fellers, I 'll be darn,
I 've had more fun, now I jest bet,
Than you can ever 'spect to get;
For old Bill Hardy, why he is one
Of the kind that goes in for fun,
An' he jest lets the fellers do
Most anything that they want to;

He 's the best hearted chap I ever knew;
Honest as can be, though jest as true
To keep his word when he is right;
As the chickens are sure to come home
at night:
But if you ever need a friend,
Bill 'll stand by you to the end:
Never grumbles 'bout what he got
When he drew his humble lot
Here on this airth, but is content
With jest its simplest enjoyment,
Always whistlin' or tryin' to sing
When he 's at work on anything;
Never discouraged, ner never blue,
But jest can see the sun shine through
The darkest cloud, that ever copes
To weaken down a feller's hopes:

Bill lost his right arm long before
He was thirty years old, in the war,
And never has been able to
Work at jest what he 'd like to do.
He draws a little pension that
Is 'nough to keep him middlin' fat
An' this together with his trade
Of mendin' things, I 'spect he 's made
'Nough to allow both ends to touch
An' maybe lap over pretty much.

I recollect when he first showed
Himself 'round these here parts; I 'lowed
I did not think that he could be
Of much use to the community,
As there is little on a farm
That you can work at with one arm;
But when I saw him one hot day
Over at Dixon's a-pitchin' hay,
An' workin' hard as any man
In the whole field with his one han',
I says to myself, well sure enough
That Hardy 's made of real good stuff.

Then he hired the barn, and settled down
To mendin' things that folks brought 'round,
Which varied from a broken chair
To a thrashing machine, an' I declare
He had more work than he could do
After he had started a week or two,
He seemed to git the fellers' heart,
Fur they took to him from the start.
Socialest bein' I ever saw,
Never tires of workin' his jaw
With a good story, or some new jokes
Jest to amuse us country folks.

From the toll gate to the blacksmith shop
I do n't know where I 'd rather stop,

To get the news or spin a yarn
Than right down in Bill Hardy's barn,

I had to laugh the other day.
I happened to be down that a-way,
An', havin' nothin' else to do,
I called on Bill a minute or two.
Well, he was busy, as he usually is,
A tinkerin' 'round them things of his,
But 'peared so glad to see me come,
That I jest made myself to hum;
We got to talkin' 'bout the ways
That people travel now-a-days:
'Bout the bustle, the rip and tear
That folks make to get anywhere,
An' Bill jest squared himself an' said,
Smoothin' his hand across his head:
"Well ridin' on these 'lectric cars
Through the country now'days far 's
My own honest opinion goes
I can't see no pleasure 'bout those
Blamed old contrivances that sail
So swift along a slip'ry rail
That you can't get a chance to see
Jest where you 're goin' or where yo' be;
You get on to the old fool thing,
A chap grabs for an' pulls a string,
An' then comes 'round and takes your
fare,

An' 'fore you know it, why you 're
there;
Not time to say Jack-rob-i-sin
'Fore you've got to git off ag'in.
Fur me, when I go anywhere
I 'll take the wagon and the mare."

I never will fergit that night
Down at Bill's barn, when me and White,
An' Drury Stout, an' two 'r three more
Of fellers from up 't the grocery store,
Was sittin' 'round an' whittlin' sticks
An' talkin' general politics,
An' Bill looked up an' sniffed the air;
As if a skunk was hid somewhere;
An' then says, "Boys, I smell some
smoke."
Of course we thought it jest a joke,
'Cause Bill 's always tryin' something
To fool the fellers, but when by jing
I took a whiff, I smelt it too,
An' lookin' up, I saw come through
The floor of the loft where Bill had kept
His duds and where he always slept,
A little cloud, puff after puff
Of thin blue smoke fur sure enough;

Well, you should jest have seen us quit
A laughin' an' git up and git;

I grabbed a-hold a water pail
A hangin' near me on a nail,
An', dog me, 'fore I reached the door
The blaze was comin' through the floor.
I never did in my born days
See sich a lot a timber blaze
As that barn did, ner feel so bad
'Cause Bill was losin' all he had.
I crossed the road in one big jump
To git some water from the pump,
But when I went to take a stroke
The blamed old handle of that pump
broke;
An' all I said I will not tell.
We had to use old Peter's well,
An' when we 'd take a bucket full,
"Old Daddy Peters" 'd take a pull
At his whiskers, and say, "Go slow
On the water, boy, fer the well 's gittin'
low."
But we kept on, an' my, O my,
I thought we 'd surely dip her dry,
'Cause now a number had run down
Who saw the blaze from up in town,
Fur it made everything so bright
That you could see all 'round that night,
And sich a time we had to save
The old barn an' tryin' to be brave

Throwin' the water in the air
And gittin' it most everywhere
But the right place, and runnin' about
Trying to put the fool thing out,
And gittin' in each other's way.
I laugh about it to this day
When I think of Bud a-dousin' Lee
With a full pail. He could n't see
Where he was goin', and got so flared
'Bout what he was doin', he jest squared
Himself to get a real good swing,
And let Lee Jones have the hull blamed
thing.
Gosh, but Lee was so mad that night
I was afraid there 'd be a fight.
They got to callin' each other liar,
And almost fergot about the fire:
I tell you things got hot for sure
And all the air was a little bluer,
Fur what they said won't bear re-
peatin'
At any kind of an old camp-meetin'.
But Jones had cause the goodness knows,
Fur he was dressed in real good clothes
A goin' a sparkin', I have no doubt,
On "Widder Brown," when the fire broke
out.

When we got things under full control,
I looked fur Bill, and, bless my soul,
There he jest stood as unconcerned,
A watchin' the old blamed barn burn,
I walked over and says, "Well, Bill,
I tell you it 's a nasty pill
To see your stuff go up in smoke."
'T was quite a while before he spoke,
Then turnin' slowly 'round to me
He says, "Sech things has got to be,
I 've lost my truck or nearly all
The little store of things I call
My own, but I aint grievin' it,
Fur there is always more to git.
But I feel so bad now when I jest
Think of that little swaller's nest
A right up there beneath the eave,
Fur they 're got young ones, I believe.
An' jest think of them little things
Not old enough to use their wings
All nestled there a-waitin' to burn
With the rest of the old concern.
Look at the mother bird flyin' there.
If that aint what yer call despair,
I like to know what is, the way
She was singin' the other day
Around that nest jest tellin' me how
Happy she was, but look at her now."

Well, I never know jest what to say
When Bill gets talkin' that a-way,
So I jest took a good big chew,
An' hunted up somethin' else to do.
After a while when the fire was out,
I seen him kind o' crawlin' 'bout
Upon the roof, and I declare
I could n't make out what he was doin'
there,
Until I seen him lean far down
Near the burnt eave and feel aroun',
Then I begin to understand,
He lifted a nest up in his hand,
And carefully a-climbin' down
With it again back to the ground,
He walked across to where I stood.
And in the dark I thought I could
See him brush off, as he drew near,
Somethin' that might have been a tear.
As he jest slowly shook his head,
Sayin', "Well, Tom, the birds are dead."

A WOMAN'S THOUGHTS.

WELL, what is the matter with Gertie, I wonder?
She sits there so quiet with nothing to say:
While we have been eating a nice little luncheon
Her thoughts seem to have wandered far away.

Thinking? yes; perhaps of the other young fellow,
Or planning some pleasure to be, when I 'm gone:
O, I would give much if I only was able
To see what her thoughts are thus dwelling upon.

Of what are you thinking? I dare now to question;
Startled she looks up, then replies without wait:
"Why, I was just thinking of what you were thinking,
By spilling so much of the food off your plate."

MEMORIES AND I.

We two are sitting all alone,
  Memories and I;
While winds without breathe low a moan
  Through pine-trees close by.
And as the hours pass away,
I hear all that he has to say
About a happy holiday
  Which has long gone by.

So pleasing is the theme to-night,
  Unconscious I feel
My unseen spirit leave in flight
  On a swift winged heel;
And through the shadows and the sun
Of all his tale I faster run,
Until, abruptly, he is done;
  And then back I steal.

I turn to find my guest is gone,
  Memories has fled;
The cock is crowing for the dawn
  And I seek my bed.

In dreams again I plainly see
The things of which he spoke to me:
But wake to find reality,—
The cold world instead.

* * *

VIOLETS.

THE violets have withered and faded
away,
As violets are sure to do.
There is nothing remains but a withered
pile
Of what was a fragrant blue.
The flowers are gone, their mission was
short.
They grew and bloomed and died,
As if to give to this earth one smile,
And then to be laid aside.
But in that smile I saw a face,
Which never will fade away,
'T was hers, who sent the violets
Upon my last birthday.

THE FIDDLER'S OLD VIOLIN.

Bevistown, Colerain Township, Hamilton County, Ohio, was the rendezvous in days gone by for all the fun-loving people of the surrounding country.

Back as far as the fifties, when big snows and long spells of good sleighing prevailed, many even drove out from the city to enjoy a night of dancing to the music of old Matt Brown, Will Huston, and Billy Roll at one of the three roadside taverns. The following poem gives an accurate description of the opening of the Bevis House, which is shown in the illustration, and which still stands, a sentinel to time, on the old Colerain Pike, some eight miles north of the city limits. Those whose names are mentioned in the following verses were actual participants in the pleasures at this dedication, which took place on New Year's eve, 1855. There are still a few "old settlers" now living in the vicinity of Bevistown who can recall most vividly the above occasion, having been there themselves or heard the story often told by some one who was.

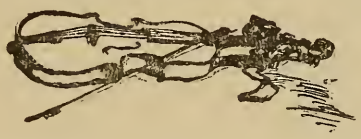
One of the old violins which contributed to the festivities on the above occasion, and to which this poem is dedicated, is now a keepsake in the possession of the author.

THE FIDDLER'S OLD VIOLIN.

THAT violin that 's laid away
Back on the shelf, I dare would say
If it could talk it would not fail
To tell to you a cheerful tale
Of a sweet past when it had sung
For measured steps of old and young:

The "fiddler," he who wove the rhyme
Upon its strings, has served his time
On earth, and now enjoys the rest
Of those who gave to life their best;
So that old fiddle 's left behind,
Somewhat a token to remind
Us of the joy there used to be
In plain rural festivity:

The ballroom with its formal ways
Was quite unknown in those old days
When a barn served them just as well
To give their dance in, with the smell



Of new crop hay that would just seem
To weigh itself on every beam;
The lantern swinging on the hook,
The candles placed in every nook,
Pumpkins lying as if asleep
In the corner, and a large heap
Of bright red apples smiling in
From where they filled a bursting bin;
The rough board floor that echoed back
Each well placed heel with such a crack
That with the rest now only went
To lend more to the merriment;

Such laughter of the boys and girls
As 'round they danced in dizzy whirls
Such shouts of overglowing glee
All mingled in the revelry,
With good cheer ringing loud a note
Of happiness from every throat,
While far above the noisy din
Rang out the fiddler's old violin:

That violin; why it could tell
You of the night the big snow fell
And people came for miles aroun'
To have a dance at Bevistown,
In a tavern that was waiting
The usual form of a dedicating.
They came in ev'ry different way
From horseback to a three-seat sleigh,
And laughed and danced the whole night through
Until the barnyard roosters crew
For day, before the last tired load
Had turned their horse out in the road.
It was upon a New-Year's eve,
And clear and cold you may believe,
For the ringing of the sleigh-bells
Sounded far up as Franklin Wells',
Jingling to the quick rhythmic beat
Of the horses fast moving feet;

It did not take them long to fill
The wagon shed, they came until
The fence was gone, and by and by
There scarcely was a place to tie.

While in around the big fireplace
Crowded ev'ry cold smiling face,
Made now to take a reddened hue
In the bright light the back-log threw:

All the fine young bloods were there
With their best girls, who looked quite
fair
As they stood shy as some young fawn
With their best "bib and tucker" on.
Aaron Stout brought two Venice girls
All radiant in lace and curls,
But, 'fore the evenin' was half though
Will Martin had one of the two.
While tricky little Maj. Huston
Had nearly fetched the other one;
That Abrams girl came with Dode
Stout,
Though Kitty Symmes was jist about
The prettiest there, lest it might be
That girl that came with Frank McGee;
Alex Doms let all know he was there,
But putting on a fine city air,
While Sarah Smith left ev'ry room
Scented up with sweet perfume;
Al Van Zandt came there all alone,
But he had a girl to take home,
Though Riley Seward drove away
Without a partner in his sleigh;

The fiddlers each had soon begun
To get their old green bag undone,
While the floor commenced to fill
With many sets for the first quadrille,

And when Bill Roll and old Matt Brown
Began to play, they beat it down
Till you could hardly hear them call
"Swing your partners" and "balance all,"
"All hands around," "grand right and
left,"
And the floor waved with the great heft;
Just the singing of those few strings
Had seemed to put new life in things,
And goodness how those fiddlers played
The "Wild Horse" and "The Little
Maid,"
"Old Gray Eagle," and "Forked Deer,"
"Seven Mile," and you could n't hear
Your ownself think after Bill Huston
Got his big elbow joint undone
On "Money Musk" and "Devil's Dream"
The whole house shook from beam to
beam.

Thus the revelry grew and grew,
Thus the hours so swiftly flew,
While each heart now feasting there
Unmindful of to-morrow's care,
Owed all the pleasure it drank in
All to a fiddler's old violin.
A violin that 's laid away
Back on the shelf, and I dare say

If it could talk it would not fail
To tell to you a cheerful tale
Of a dear past that is to be
Sweetest to us in memory,
Just for the pleasure that once has been
Due to the fiddler's old violin.

ONE YEAR AGO.

JUST one short year ago to-day the sun
seemed to shine out more bright,
Just one short year ago to-day the stars in-
creased their twinkling light;
Each flower growing near my path waved
sweeter fragrance from its bloom,
Each bird that sang from leafy boughs made
softer music of its tune;
The earth, the sky, all that life holds trans-
formed as in a magic way;
If I remember I met you just one short year
ago to-day.

"JONES."

TALK about a fellow preachin'
In a way that sort o' goes
Through your system an' a-reachin'
From your head down to your toes;
Blame me if I 've heard another
That could rattle up your bones,
And jest make you feel you 'd ruther
Be some good, than that Sam Jones.

Common kind o' talk he uses,
Swears a little now and then,
But a point he never loses
Showin' up some so-called men;
Do n't know where he got his schoolin',
Do n't know how much earth he owns,
But I do know 't aint no foolin'
With back talk 'round this Sam Jones.

Aint a fellow to be formal,
Laughs and jokes at our expense;
But I 'low he 's just 'bout normal
When it comes to common sense;
Always kicking at the devil
Till you fairly hear his groans,
An' for havin' a head that 's level
On religion, it is Sam Jones.

WHEN THE DAWN IS IN THE SKY.

WHEN the dawn is in the sky and the heart
awakes to find
That all its sweet caressings were but fancies
of the mind
Which soon are lost to memory, as the light
comes through the pane

And the music of the morning calls us back
to earth again;
Which is now a dreamland flooded in the
golden of the sun,
With a birth of bursting blossoms to a new
life just begun;
Where the birds are all a singing with a
happy unrestrain
As the dew drips from the grasses, like a
gentle summer rain.

And when everything in common holds a
greeting for the eye
Upon its first awakening, when the dawn is
in the sky.

When the dawn is in the sky, and the little
stars of night
Grow dim and lose their twinkle in the early
morning light
Which peeps above the mountain and down
along the stream,
Where the whirling of the waters like echoes
from a dream
Are lost within the silence of a robin's plaint-
ive song,
Given from the soul of nature when the pulse
of life beats strong;
While the smoke above the cabin like a misty
hallowed wreath;
Or like sweet comfort's blessings from a
happy home beneath,
Where day has kissed the darkness, causing
fairy forms to fly
Back to fairies' "Dreamland" when the dawn
is in the sky.

When the dawn is in the sky, when the dawn
is in the sky,
How the fancy loves to ramble through the
happy days gone by,

When we drove the cows to pasture in the
early of the day,
And stopped to beat the thistles which grew
along the way.
Or waded in the silent, shallow waters of the
brook,
Or imitated heroes in some childish story-
book;
I wonder if in Heaven we can live this all
again,
With that wayward, youthful feeling un-
marred by worldly stain,
Can we find our boyhood's morning free from
either sob or sigh,
And with all its golden sweetness: with the
dawn across its sky?

MY ROOM.

KINGS may claim their costly castles,
Millionaires their mansions fine,
But for myself I find a palace
In this one room which I call mine.

PITY THEM.

PITY them who can't say No
When temptation lures too strong;
Pity them who feebly go
In the way they know is wrong;
Pity and a kind word speak,
Try their better self to seek
Help them, for their will is weak:
Pity them.

Pity her who 's gone astray
Mid the city's gauze and glare;
Pity, for it was not the way
She had dreamed that put her there;
With painted cheeks and hollow eyes,
She 's down to where she can not rise;
Death now is her best compromise:
Pity her.

Pity him a slave to drink,
A greater curse he could not own;
Pity the soul that will so sink
To where it never can atone;

He once looked out of innocent eyes
Upon a world of brilliant skies;
But there in the gutter now he lies:
Pity him.

Pity the weak who e'er they be;
They tried perhaps, but failed the task;
Pity them, for there 's good to see
In every one beneath the mask:
Their cradle-song was not in vain,
Although they could not stand the strain,
Their hearts may still echo its sweet refrain:
Pity them.

A JOKE.

A JOKE 's a joke because the wit
Is quick to see the point of it.
But should the point appear too dim
To any one, the joke 's on him.

A ROSE AND A SEA SHELL.

A ROSE and a sea shell sent to me
By a friend of mine who happened to be
In the Southern summer-land,
And perhaps, with her own hand
She has plucked this rose for me
From a garden near the sea,
Where, at evening, as the rush
Of the waves has stilled the blush
On its cheeks, and where the dew
Of the night has kissed it too;
And the morning sun has chased
Away the drops and has replaced
In their stead a light, which holds
To each leaf as it unfolds
Such a glory as is known
To the bursting rose alone.

While the shell with many more
Has been gathered 'long the shore,
Where a wave in trying to leap
Across the sand, has from the deep
Brought it up and laid it where
My young friend had found it there.

So, into this my letter-file
Awaiting some sweet afterwhile
When I have more time to lend
To the sweet thoughts of a friend,
I place the rose and shell so frail
Which were sent me through the mail
By a friend, who chanced to be
In a summer-land beside the sea.

I KNEW HE WOULD COME IF I WAITED.

I KNEW he would come if I waited,
Though waiting, it caused me despair;
And I sat by the window and listened
To hear his first step on the stair:
For I knew he would come if I waited,
But anxiously I paced 'round the floor.
O, to see his own form on the threshold
As I hastened to open the door.
Would he come? But how dare I question
His faithfulness to his own word;
Would he dare not come at my calling?
Or was that his dear step that I heard?
O, I rush to the door for to meet him,
For to welcome him here after all,
For I knew he would come if I waited,
He would come to answer my call.
Yes, yes, it is he on the pavement,
He 's coming, he 's ringing the bell,
And my heart beats wild with rapture
Of a joy which I never can tell,
For I knew he would come if I waited,
Yes, he 'd come at my call; joy, O joy,
What happiness it is to welcome
Just to welcome: "the messenger boy."

PICTURES WE PAINT IN OUR MIND.

THERE are times in our lives when we each stop to think
Of just what the next world 's going to be;
We wonder and ponder if this life 's but a link
In the great chain of eternity.

We are born, live a while here on earth, then we die;
Well is that where the story all ends?
Or is there such a place where we 'll meet face to face
With those whom we have once called our friends?

Will you be just the same? Will you have the same name?
Will you look as you look when you die?
Or will everything change to everything strange
In the mere twinkling of an eye?

Where did we come from? Where are we
going to?
What is this called a soul hid inside?
It 's a problem that no one 's been able to do,
Though many philosophers have tried.

I can look out on you, you can look out
on me,
Here 's a body with hands, feet, and
head,
But the spark of this life neither of us can
see,
Will we hold claim to it when we 're
dead?

When this flesh rots away and turns back
into clay
Does the soul soar to summits on high,
And from there can look down on the little
green mound
In the church yard where our bodies lie?

Does a bud that has drooped ere it burst into
bloom,
There continue its fragrance to keep?
Will that dear sweet face smile in the great
afterwhile,
As it did when she fell fast asleep?

Will love linger to kiss in the life after this
The near and the dear to our heart?
Will memory's vine cling to every past thing
That has once caused our pulse beat to start?

O, mystery unsolved, we bow weak at thy will,
Take us, make us into what you care,
But give for the tear and all suffering here
An equal in the smiles of UP THERE.

We sit down and picture a heaven so fair;
We make it as fancy best deems,
And we build and we gild as our wishes have willed
In the beautiful valley of dreams.

There 'll be towers and walls and large marble halls
Where the echoes of laughter will ring:
There 'll be gardens in bloom breathing fragrant perfume
Where the sweet-throated warblers will sing.

In the castle's cool shade where the tables are laid
We will eat of the season's best yield:

While far down there below the lost river will flow
Through the woodland and meadow and field.

There the sky will be blue save the white clouds that strew
Their broad billowy foam, to defy
The sun's golden gleam, which will cause them to seem
Like the sails of the ships floating by.

There the earth will be green with bright flowers, between
Which will wave at their will in the breeze,
There the murmuring brooks in Nature's cool nooks
Will sing as they flow 'neath the trees.

Nothing there is denied, every wish gratified,
You 're to choose what the harpist should play.
Thus each sense will be lulled 'till it 's drowsy and dulled,
Then it sleeps joy's exhaustion away.

There will be no more need of a sect, of a creed,
In this place which we all hope to reach,

For at last we 'll be freed from all envy and
greed,
Content will come equal to each.

Thus forever we 'll live in this land far away
Like children unconscious of age,
But whiling there away an endless holiday,
As in pleasure's sweet pastime we engage.

May it come to be true, yes for me, yes for
you;
When we leave this old planet behind;
Be it then that we 'll see the sweet reality
Of the pictures we paint in our mind.

THEME.

Pictures, pictures we paint in our mind,
Pictures of future, of things left behind;
As down life's long lane to the end we will
wind
We will paint pictures, pictures in our mind.

MID THE DAISIES.

SHE stood in a meadow of daisies
  Gathering a large bouquet
Alone, all alone with the flowers
  That crowded about her way.

The morning was fresh with the fragrance
  Of an incense the dew had distilled,
As the sun dried the tears from the flowers
  Which the stars in their weeping had filled.

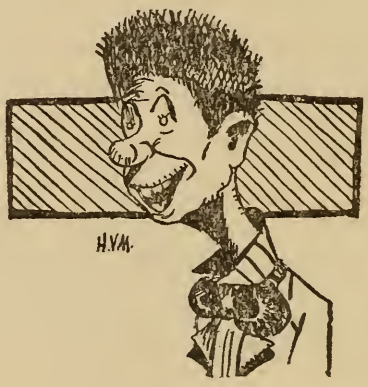
No clouds were at play with the sunbeams,
  But the clearness that mellowed the sky
Was as pure and serene as the sparkle
  To be found in the innocent eye.

And O, how the birds were all singing,
  And the songs that they sang were the best,
They could give as a hearty good welcome
  To the maiden,—their young honored guest.

For she was to them like a fairy;
  As the daisies she stood there among
With that blush which is joy to its owner,
  When the heart of its owner is young.

GEE, BUT IT 'S GREAT TO BE CRAZY.

I JUST have swallowed a quart of red ink:
Gee, but it 's great to be crazy.
It 's so good for the blood, do n't you think:
Gee, but it 's great to be crazy.

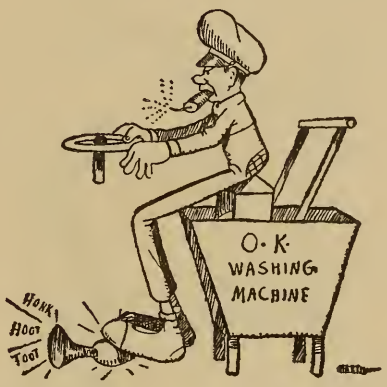


Before I used nothing but liquid glue,
But got so stuck up in a week or two
I hardly knew what I was going to do:
Gee, but it 's great to be crazy.

I 've nailed a horn on the washing-machine:
Gee, but it 's great to be crazy.
I 've filled the tub full of best gasoline:
Gee, but it 's great to be crazy.

Now when I turn the little round wheel
In trying to make a clean record that 's real,
It sounds just like an automobile:
  Gee, but it 's great to be crazy.

I played the millionaire the other day:
  Gee, but it 's great to be crazy.
By trying to give all my money away:
  Gee, but it 's great to be crazy.



I threw most of it in the air,
And watched it blow over everywhere,
'T was a jolly fine sport, I must declare:
  Gee, but it 's great to be crazy.

I made a snowball one day in July:
  Gee, but it 's great to be crazy.
I placed it out in the warm sun to dry:
  Gee, but it 's great to be crazy.
But it was not the right brand of snow,
For when I looked there in an hour or so,

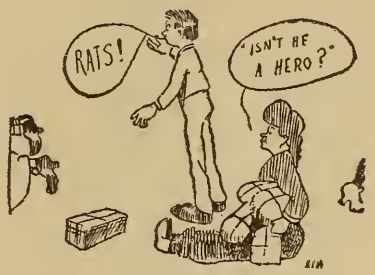
All that I could find was the overflow:
Gee, but it's great to be crazy.

I sleep with my head out the window at night:
Gee, but it's great to be crazy.

I find it gives me such a good appetite:
Gee, but it's great to be crazy.
The other morning a storm took place
As I lay there in slumber's embrace.
When I awoke I had "rain in the face:"
Gee, but it's great to be crazy.

O, I am a hero, a hero brave:
Gee, but it's great to be crazy.
Yes, a human life I once did save:
Gee, but it's great to be crazy.
A little woman who was very frail
Was being crushed at a bargain sale.
I yelled rats! and cleared the trail:
Gee, but it's great to be crazy.

I once was arrested and put in jail:
Gee, but it's great to be crazy.



But I bought a bucket and got out on bail:
Gee, but it's great to be crazy.
When I took a notion in a notion-store
To heed a sign, sayin' "take this door,"
I had to put it back in its place once more:
Gee, but it's great to be crazy.

I tried to steer an automobile:
Gee, but it's great to be crazy.
Something went wrong with the turning wheel:
Gee, but it's great to be crazy.

We left the pike and took to the wood,
Killed a flock of cows, so I 've understood,
But just for a start I think I did good:
  Gee, but it 's great to be crazy.

I tried to live the simple life:
  Gee, but it 's great to be crazy.

I put aside all worldly strife:
  Gee, but it 's great to be crazy.
But after following these simple ways
I became so simple in a few days
That every one would stop and gaze.
  Gee, but it 's great to be crazy.

Now anybody who can talk like this:
Gee, but it's great to be crazy,
Must surely have something amiss:
Gee, but it's great to be crazy.
Of course they can not do any harm,
So don't get scared or cause alarm.
They're only delegates for the funny farm:
Gee, but it's great to be crazy.

DRESSED IN BROWN.

You will find her wherever you might care to go
'Round the town;
She makes what would be called in slang terms, "A good show
Worth a crown."
On all the thoroughfares
She puts on such great airs
To attract the men's stares,
Dressed in brown.

She 's quite stylish in all you can't help but confess
With a frown;
For it shows much good taste to select such a dress
Called a gown.
She will hold her head high
Till you 'd think that she 'd try
To be sensibly shy
Dressed in brown.

It 's a nice shade of cloth, yes, the latest of style,
Not marked down;
She has had it made up by a tailor worth while
Of renown.
So when now on the street
This young lady you meet,
You remark, "How petite
Dressed in brown."

MY FLOWER.

GOD'S flowers are not all one kind,
Our hearts must choose those we like best,
And passing leave them grow behind
Which in us wake no interest.

He made one flower to grow so fair
Beside the way which I came down
That when I found it blooming there,
My heart leaped to it with a bound.

I longed to call it all my own;
I asked for it with fond caress;
A gentle breeze from heaven blown,
Waved its young head to answer, Yes.

O, how its beauty cheered my heart,
Its perfume lulled my every sense,
Each hour I lived from it apart
Was to me one long suspense.

Then came the time when God saw right
To take from me my precious gem,
To turn my day into a night;
To pull the flower from its stem.

Alone I sit as friends pass by,
  Each constant to his chosen love,
And wonder if again shall I
  Find my fair flower up above.

Will Heaven ever let me hold
  The fragrant beauty of my rose,
To love and fondle as of old
  The little flower which I chose.

WHEN I WAS A KID.

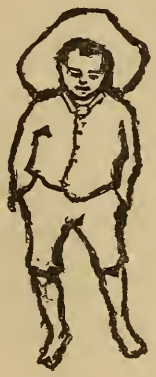
WHEN I was a kid, what did I care
About the proper clothes to wear;
An old straw hat, a home-made shirt,
Torn more or less, and worse for dirt;
Shoes 'bout half gone around the toes,
A knee hole worn in both my hose;
A pair of pants patched where I slid
Down cellar doors, when I was a kid.

When I was a kid, what did I care
If a comb never passed through my hair,
And taking time to wash my face,
Why, such a thing was out of place.
'Cause goodness knows a little dirt
A feller gets aint goin' to hurt.
When company came I run and hid;
I was n't missed, when I was a kid.

When I was a kid, that 's some time back,
A good appetite I never did lack,
Jam and jelly, iced cake and pie,
Roasted turkey, O me! O my!

I 'd eat and eat, just like a toad,
Until I thought I would explode,
But it was n't long 'fore it was rid,
And I wanted more, when I was a kid.

When I was a kid, yes, just a kid,
Sometimes I did n't do as I was bid.
My pa, he had a big strong knee
That seemed to fit right under me.
In this position it took not long
To prove to me that I was wrong,
For he was handy, and what he did
To me was plenty, when I was a kid.



EVENING.

AGED friend, the light of your long day
Slowly, slowly fades away;
And now like one who stands upon
The hills and looks back to the dawn
Across a broad and misty vale
Of things forgotten, you can trail
Those paths known best to you, for all
The sweets of memory they recall.

In childhood's rambles over there,
With flowers blooming everywhere,
You little knew the time you spent
Was golden for its pure content;
And through the valley where the day
Seemed brightest as you went your way
Unthoughtful of all left behind,
But striving on to quench the mind
Of thirsting for a sweeter bit
Than Earth had cared to lend to it.

Then into passion's anxious lane,
With all to lose, with all to gain;
Where vice plays tempter to the good
And wrecks the promise of manhood,

You hastened on and on and on
Towards that future which withdrawn
Allowed you not to reach or see
More than the cold reality.

Thus through the ever winding aisles
With sorrow's sting or pleasure's smiles
With love to soothe, with hope to cheer,
With pain to bear, with sin to fear,
On, on a-past the marble tiers
Which mark the calendar of years,
Until the shadows come to bless
You with a peaceful quietness,
As now you linger here and wait
The opening of yon Heaven gate,
Which holds for you a cup distilled
Of perfect joy for all fulfilled
Here on the earth where God knew best
The lessons you should learn to test
The strength of soul, which in the name
Of Death he shortly will reclaim.

THE FACE THE FAIRIES FORMED.

A BAND of fairies decided one day
To model a new little baby that lay
All bundled up, and ribbon tied,
In a pretty white bed, at its mother's side.
So getting their tools they started to work
With here a soft pressure and there a slight
jerk,
A pinch of a finger, a pull at the nose,
A rub on the backbone, a twist of the toes,
For in every spot which showed a defect
They lost not a minute to make it correct.
While baby slept on as babies will do,
Awakening at times to consent with a coo,
As if there was aught in such a weak cooing
To alter the task which the fairies were doing.

So days went by and the noiseless band
Of busy imps from fairyland
Worked steadily on by day and night,
But always keeping out of sight
When curious people came and went
To see the child and pass comment

Upon the work which they had done
In shaping up this little one.

To some were given all the care
Of picking out a shade of hair,
While others who, more apt and wise,
Were busy with selecting eyes:
An artist skilled with paint and brush
Took on himself to make the flush
Upon each cheek and red the tips
Around the corners of both lips,
While just below upon the chin
Some scamp had pushed a dimple in
And then this naughty little one
Not content with mischief done,
Shy and cautiously the sneak
Gouged a dimple in each cheek.

'T was not long before a change
Had made the baby look quite strange,
And as the years pass in a whirl
This baby grew into a girl
That everybody loved because
She was so free from any flaws,
And even birds would come and sit
Beside her for the longest bit,
While bees and bugs and beetles swarmed
To see the face the fairies formed.

HIS MOTHER'S FACE.

THE baby looked up from the cradle,
And seeing her, he smiled;
For she was his own dear mother,
And he, her only child:
They were happy, alone there together,
The infant robed in lace,
Contented to be just where he could see
The smile of his mother's face.

'T is noon; school 's out and the children
Shout it in wild alarms,
As through the open door he springs once more
Into his mother's arms:
Here consoled, here advised, here protected
In this loving embrace,
A smile that is known to come from heaven alone
Hallows his mother's face.

Grown to manhood, with duty telling
Him now that he must part;
They stand together in the old doorway,
Both with an aching heart.

She 's proud of her boy as into this world
He goes to take his place,
But he heaves a sigh, as he kisses good-bye
His mother's tear-stained face.

Back at home once again, but it is not the same
Home that it was before,
That sweet, kind voice, that dear old smile
Can brighten it no more:
All his hopes, all future, thoughts of else forgot
As in grief he bows to trace
A smile of that great eternal life
On his mother's cold dead face.

AT MECHILE.

THE night was dark, the rain beat down,
The tempest raged so high,
The thunder rolled, the lightning flashed
Across the clouded sky,
The train was speeding swiftly on,
Each minute meant a mile,
When a woman raised the window
And shouted, "Where 's Mechile?"
Where 's Mechile? The conductor asked her
As the train flew on so fast,
"Why, good woman, that 's the station
Which we just now have passed."
"Back, back this train," she loudly cried,
"Back, back this train, I say."
The engineer reversed the lever, and went the other way.
When they had gone some fourteen miles
To where they reached the town,
The woman gave a sigh of relief
As she shut the window down,

And taking from a satchel near
A sugar-coated pill,
Between her lips she let it slip,
And then sat very still:
When the trainmen rushed to find her
She met them with a smile,
Saying, "O, I thank you kindly, gentlemen,
I was to take one at Mechile."

MY MOTHER'S WEDDING-DAY.

JUST forty years ago to-day
A bride came down the broad hall stair,
The sun that beamed across her way
Seemed to smile in its golden glare,
As it touched a curl and a crimson flush
Upon her cheek, where purity
Of womanhood burned forth a blush
With happy heart throbs fast and free;
No anger's frown nor wrinkled care
Could find a depth to anchor in
Or dim the light of two eyes fair
Which held that seriousness within
Of Love's own dream, which seemed to tell
Of earth's desirings gratified;
And though the lash which quickly fell
Across the eye could never hide
That consciousness of pure delight
Which comforted when it had smiled
Its surplus joy, then taking flight
Drops soulward, fully reconciled;
She was as fair a queen that day
As ever graced the richest throne,
Or caused her subject to make way
As she advancing, walked alone,

For down into the whirling throng
With laughter ringing everywhere
Throughout the halls, its merry song,
And jolly good cheer in the air;
She came, so beautiful to see,
To give for better or for worse
That gift of Heaven's purity
To mankind's bond of universe.
And as the sacred knot was tied
Which bound two souls in equal fate,
A little song bird just outside
Turned and whispered to his mate;
Then flying to a tree top where
Could best be heard his roundelay,
He gave out to the silent air
A sweet "God bless your wedding-day."

Yes, that was many years ago;
But still to-night a man and wife
Sit in the fire light's cheery glow
And turn the pages of their life
Backward to where their love began,
With two united hearts which went
A winding path that slowly ran
Through shade and shine until content
Has left them with an ebbing flame
Beneath the locks of mingled gray,
But where the smile comes just the same
As on my mother's wedding-day.

IT ALL COMES RIGHT IN THE END.

THERE 'S an old saying I have heard
For many years, though not a word
Sounds any worse off for the wear
Which they have often had to bear
In helping to console some one
Who perhaps a wrong had done,
And now repenting, finds a friend
In saying, "It all comes right in the end."

The mother, emblem of all good
Who patiently has long withstood
The thoughtlessness of younger years,
Where wayward steps have caused the tears
So oft to flow, now finds relief
In reconciling all her grief
By faith, in that all shadows blend
Into the brightest, near the end.

All weightiness of pain and care
That each of us has had to bear

Within the little while we stay,
Appears that it might overweigh
Those hours when we felt the stress
Of pure unconscious happiness,
But life has yet to find the trend
When everything comes right in the end.

Yes, everything before it ends
Must balance as our God intends,
The hope which long withheld defeat
Will gratify itself complete,
And all the dreams that Fancy drew
Will answer for not coming true;
The tear will dry; the heart will mend
And everything come right in the end.

PARTING.

COULD the heart but see the heart now before this word "Forever"
Causes either lips to part, and the last frail strands we sever;
Could the soul but see the soul as we say this last good-bye,
And the hand the hand but hold, and the eye look to the eye.
For the past has been a harp where the idle fingers laid,
Until we woke the dream of the player, then he played
Those low sweet strains of love while together we would smile;
Only now to pay the tear to an endless after-while.
For the harpist, he is gone and the strings lie broke in twain,
While the music that he played will never sound again,
The rose has faded brown as the roses oft will die,
But it was all for the best, so "GOD BLESS YOU," and good-bye.

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